

ISLAM

THE FREEDOM TO SERVE



BY

SHEIKH NAZIM



SPOHR

Sheikh Nazim: Islam – The Freedom To Serve

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ISLAM

The Freedom To Serve



ŞUHĖBATS, APHORISMS AND STORIES

BY

SHEIKH

MUĖHAMMAD NĀZIM 'ĀDIL

AL-ĖHAQQĀNĪ



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*In the Name of Allab Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent*



F I WERE TO CLAIM that this speech was my own, they could cast me out. If I said, ‘These are my words’, I would cut myself off from the chain of the Sheikhs of our way. I would be alone. I would say: ‘I am here.’ And whoever says ‘I am’, must be cast out.



INTRODUCTION

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*



IT IS DIFFICULT in our days to find someone who is willing to bear the burden of anyone else. We do not like to bear one another. We do not even want to bear with ourselves. Nearly everyone wants to be someone else, not himself and not herself, but somebody different.

So many people want to be rid of themselves. They pursue whatever helps them to disguise themselves, to forget themselves. They think that in order to reach that aim, it is not sufficient to be somebody else, it is better to be no one at all, a no-one. They think it is better to lose one's mind, even better not to be human. Millions come to look at them, to imitate them. It is a storm in our time, not just a wind: a mighty storm.

How do you speak to such people? How do you guide them to reality? They have lost their will. They have given up their intelligence. How then are they able to judge themselves? They claim that they have reached the highest degree of civilisation and yet they act worse than those whom they call uncivilised.

This mindlessness is still on the increase and because of it the world will split up into two camps. One will be populated by those who care about themselves and about reality: those who ask about the reason for their existence and about its meaning. The other will consist of those who never ask such questions, those who know everything already, who believe that life is only there to fulfill their desires. To eat, to drink, to 'live it up', as they say. Such people are only apparently human beings, but not in reality. To the degree that this tendency is increasing, humanity is being divided into two groups. One group says, there must be someone, or something, something immense, and we must try to understand it. The other, greater group, is interested in nobody and nothing but themselves. For billions of people in our time, life is just this relentless running after shadows, after their so-called needs. They know quite well the madness of it all and consent to wear the mask of madness because it allows them to follow their selfish desires even better. Others stand on both sides of the street, watching the parade and cheering. The young ones exhibit themselves and the old ones stare.

The sayings of the prophets mention the signs of the end of time, and we know that Allah Almighty is examining His servants. Now, in our days, He is testing us through the enemy of mankind. However, this enemy is not one who fits so well into the current picture of the time, this enemy is one whom we hardly recognise any more. All these masquerades and festivals, all these orgies of disguise are preparing mankind for this enemy. Whoever is attracted by such things will be amongst his first followers. For he attracts his followers through unusual and extraordinary things, through everything that shines and glitters.

What can you expect from people who have handed their will over to their ego? How can they understand the meaning of life, how can they have even the slightest inkling about the life of the spirit and about spiritual powers? They drink to wash their

INTRODUCTION

minds and their senses away. They refuse to be human, and they are close to succeeding. They get drunk on words, on the sound of their music, on alcohol, on sexuality. They even get drunk on Feast Days, in the name of their religion, in order to forget about it. Eventually, this madness will pull them into a big war. For such parades influence their personality. They become changed inside and driven to request the limitless satisfaction of their egoistic desires – to get everything out of this life during their lifetime, immediately, here and now. They have no more patience, no more eye for what is of real benefit.

The young people want change. They want to change their own lives and the lives of everybody. They grow up, and their only idea of change is that everybody should be like themselves. Whoever dares to oppose them is their enemy. They will not hesitate to hurt him or to simply shove him out of the picture.

We are living in a time where everything is reaching its climax. After reaching the top, you cannot continue. There are no further ways to continue.



INVITATION

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*

WHAT MOVES SOMEONE to approach Islam and what makes him run away? – Islam is not the property of a people or a nation of this earth, and it does not belong to a particular group of people. It was brought to all human beings and thus speaks to them all.

We are all born on a particular day and on a particular day we will die. Between that first day and the last, myriads of miseries and difficulties come down upon us, and we want all of them to be removed and ask for their causes to be healed.

Should we be left to our own devices with no one to help us? If anyone came to help us, would we send them away, would we turn the other way?

The Lord of the Heavens, the Lord of the Lands, the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of all Creatures is not pleased to see His servants suffer, He would rather grant them a happy life. That is why He has sent prophets to mankind at all times, time and again: to bring them the good news.

These prophets were mostly sent to one tribe, one people, one nation only. But the last prophet was sent to all people. His message is Islam. If people really want what they claim to ask for, peace and a cure for their sufferings, then they could try Islam. They try out so many new ideas and ideologies, why not move to the core of the real?

Look! If your heart is at rest with Islam and finds truth in it, then stay with it! Look at the way it began. See where it started, under which circumstances, at which time. Look at the Prophet of Islam, how he passed the message which had been given to him on to others. After you have seen all of this and weighed it up, judge for yourself.

Judge what you are trying to understand by looking at its beginning and at its greatness. If you judge something on the grounds of its shortcomings and deficiencies, it means that you do not want to understand it.

All prophets have called people to enjoy a peaceful, quiet and happy life. But each time they have been confronted by the resistance of hateful people and by the anger of the devils and their helpers. As soon as someone comes with a message from God Almighty with true sincerity and conviction, he is attacked. They attempt to lock him up, to chase him away, or even to kill him.

One of the signs of this century is that even those who imagine themselves to be religious fight against their prophets. The Jews think they would be better off without Moses, because he brought the Torah, and the Torah mentions the Last Prophet whom God will send. The Christians close their ears to the words of their prophet, Jesus Christ. For he invites his people to follow Muḥammad, the last messenger of Allah Almighty. May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon them both and upon all prophets. In our days, whole nations deny the wisdom of the last messenger.

The world is rolling slowly and irresistibly into a dark tunnel. Nobody knows what will happen in this tunnel. We only know of its existence because Allah Almighty has informed us of it. We know from prophetic utterances that this tunnel will have an end and that of all those who enter it, only a few will reappear.

These are not my own words. It is mentioned in all of the Holy Books which say, when human beings stop listening to

reason, when they throw wisdom out of the window and follow only the advice of their egos, they will slide into a narrow, terrible tunnel. This tunnel will wash away all evil and all dirt. Now, day by day, step by step, the world is sinking deeper into it. Darkness is spreading, and outside the air is frozen.

The way through this tunnel is difficult, very difficult, but those who are fortunate enough to leave it again, will find themselves in a world suffused with light and peace. May the Lord Allah Almighty help us. We beg for help in the battle against our most terrible enemy, our own ego, in the battle against ourselves. Gun-barrels, tanks and bombs are not in the position to call it to a halt. It is only too familiar with such weapons and does not fear them at all. No, the only weapon which can stop its terrible course, the only one which can teach it fear, is something completely different. It is something which hardly anyone thinks about any more when he is looking for help. It is the unity of God. It only submits to that. This, and nothing else, is the message of Islam. All religions agree upon this. They all call people to the unity of Allah Almighty and gather them together into this unity. They all tell us how we can attain to the power of God or how we can be prepared for it to come to us.

When people meet in the unity of Almighty God, then wars will cease between them. This is something which our ego does not want to happen at all. It is not in its interest that it happens. It does not want to come together with anything or anyone. It wants to be alone and to stay alone, always in front, always on top. Nobody may accompany it, nobody may go alongside it, others must be underneath it, at its feet. These are its demands, and so it remains from the beginning of mankind to the end. However, religions do not accept this. When we say *lā ilāha illā Llab*, there is no God except Allah, then everyone who says this wholeheartedly is called into the Oneness of God Almighty.

These holy words are not the speciality of one prophet or the fabrication of a special religion. All prophets, thousands of prophets have said it. None of them says that there is more than One God. With these words we can tell the difference between a true prophet and a false prophet. Whoever calls us to believe in the unity of God, is calling us to the straight path and is a true messenger of Allah Almighty. Whoever does not do this, whoever calls us to believe in and worship another god or more gods, does not follow God, but his own ego.

One's feeling of 'I' naturally fights against such claims. It says: 'No, there is no god except me. I am your lord, I, I, I and nobody else. I won't allow you to serve anybody else.' It talks in this way, and when it is left alone it will not rest until the whole world is subjected to it. This is its true character. None of us is free from this. If we were offered to be rulers over the whole world and all its treasures we would seize the opportunity without hesitation. The only weapon, the greatest protection against the fortress of the ego, is the sentence which calls us to testify to the unity of God Almighty, *lā ilāha illā Llab*.

It is clear that whoever remains under the yoke of his ego keeps clear of Islam. He refuses point blank and finds thousands of excuses, discovers the most enlightening explanations, makes the cleverest statements and is still only a slave of his ego. If people only looked with understanding and intelligence, they would realise that Islam only fights against this ego and not against humanity! Would it not be better to turn to it for help?

How is it possible that when the house is on fire and you run to rescue the people, they refuse? They do not want to be saved. They no longer know what is of benefit to them and what is harmful for them. They cannot distinguish between friend and foe, between corruption and salvation: the blindness of their ego is so advanced.

INVITATION

Islam stretches its hand out to save men and women from the claws of their selfishness and to give them their freedom. The freedom to serve their true and only Lord, Allah Almighty.

It is for these servants that the following description of the path to servanthood and the short excerpts of advice for servants are given. They will help them to find their way out of the tunnel because they will help them to learn to distinguish between light and darkness.

I received such advice from my master and I have been ordered to pass on what I received from him to all those of you who are willing to listen.



PART ONE

THE PATH
TO SERVANTHOOD



BELIEF

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*



OUR AIM IS to be perfect servants. But we cannot begin with servanthood because we will not be able to bear its weight from the beginning. Servanthood must be preceded by worship, which must be true worship. If it is worship of the ego, you will not reach the level of servanthood. Thus, your worship must be based on belief. If your worship is based on belief, if it is not worship of yourself but of your Lord, then you will be *with* Him. For only servants are with their Lord.

So many people in our days, perhaps even billions, are proud of not believing in anything. There is only one important belief, the belief in God. If you believe in the existence of the Creator, it is easy to believe in everything else. How can the average person with an average mind not believe? How can he, if he uses his mind, not know of the existence of the Lord, Almighty?

We only call this knowledge 'belief' because our senses cannot reach Him. But our mind may reach Allah Almighty with exact knowledge. We say, 'you must believe', because we cannot see, hear, touch, smell, or taste Him. But our mind knows Him very well according to every kind of knowledge. There is no knowledge that does not point to him. The senses of our physical body may not help us to reach Him, but our soul does and all of our physical feelings derive, finally, from our soul. If there was no soul in our physical body, we could neither smell, nor taste,

nor touch. All feelings originate in the soul, and all are limited by our physical being. The physical body cannot bear whatever exceeds these limits. Yet we look at the universe through the tiny holes of our eyes. We may actually imagine the size of this universe, imagine the size of mankind on earth, when already from a distance of five thousand metres above the earth mankind cannot be seen. It is miraculous: such tiny holes in a tiny body seeing beyond millions of light-years. How is this possible?

However, this is a limited vision. If you compare it with the full capacity of your soul, it is nothing. When you look, using the spiritual power of your soul, every galaxy, every sun, every star, can be seen exactly as it is. They are not seen like a small dish or a spot, but as they are, in their full reality. It is through this power of the soul that God Almighty may be reached. No one knows the true essence of the soul. Many times the Seal of the Prophets, Sayyidinā Muḥammad, peace be upon him, was asked about it. He answered that the soul is of the Order of the Divine. What is the Order of the Divine? The Prophet's answer meant that it is impossible to know the reality of the soul, as long as we are bound to our physical existence. Only when we have reached the territory of the soul itself will we be able to understand it. Therefore, we have been ordered to believe in God.

In our time there are so many foolish people who think that God does not exist because they cannot reach him with their physical senses. This is utter ignorance. They think that the Lord Almighty Allah should be the same as His creatures.

However, the Creator must have something that none of his creatures has. The senses are incapable of judging the existence of a Creator: something else is needed, something non-material, which is the mind.

We think our brain is our mind, but that is incorrect. The mind is something else. There is a brain in our head, it is true, but if the power of the soul does not illuminate it, it will not

work. Take those lights away and the brain stops. When you find someone who has drowned and you take him out of the water, you may find that the material brain does not work although it is not damaged.

The lights of the mind have left it. We mean this non-material mind when we say to those who deny the existence of God, 'Use your mind!' If your mind and your consciousness say 'No', tell us. We belong to the same creation, we have the same feelings as you. But when we use our mind, we know of the existence of our Lord. If you have doubts, it means that you are not using your mind. If only you used it you could easily believe in the existence of the Lord Almighty Allah. Then you could easily believe in everything which belongs to the Heavens, everything that happens after death, everything about hell and paradise.

Believe in everything pertaining to eternal life! For, after this physical existence, you will reach spiritual existence, that is, the existence of your soul. No one knows about the creation of souls because they have been and will be in existence as long as Allah exists. We are servants of the Lord Almighty Allah as long as He exists. Without servants, the Lord, *sulṭān*, is not Lord. So there must have been those who have served Him for all eternity. He spoke to them, commanding them. If there was nobody with Him to serve Him, He would have to be Lord over Himself. But He cannot be his own *sulṭān*.


After death, our souls will reach their full capacity, their full spiritual power. Now, we are using only very little of this power, and that is why it is impossible for us to understand our spiritual existence.

Certainty can only come from our spiritual being. But even if we have not yet reached this being, there is a bridge from our physical to our spiritual existence. Belief is this bridge. It is a bridge joining you to your higher self. Without it, you are without connection or relationship within yourself.

If people deny beliefs, they must always remain at the level of their physical being. If they do not want to reach their spiritual being, their disconnectedness throws them into heavy depressions, darkness and miseries. This is the punishment: in this world, depression and darkness, and in their graves, dust. They will be dust. The bridge must stand on two feet. One foot is here, in the physical existence, another foot is there, in the spiritual existence. After death, you do not have any feet to build your bridge on. So, use your mind. Begin here, with belief.

WORSHIP AND SERVANTHOOD

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*

 HE DEVIL IS not ignorant. He is extremely learned. But his knowledge has never given him any benefit, and, thus, after learning so many things, he has returned to the state of ignorance.

The ignorance of a learned person is, however, much more dangerous to himself and to others than the ignorance of an ignorant person. The latter may harm himself as well as others, but this harm is nothing in comparison with the terrible damage wrought by a learned person's ignorance.

The chief and first one of this kind is the devil. He was the teacher of the angels. Allah Almighty gave him the opportunity to be their teacher and master. He knows all the Holy Books. He thinks that he alone knows, and that others do not know. But he is still ignorant, and has never left this state of ignorance. He thinks that he is right and others are wrong. He even thinks that he was right and that his Lord was wrong. That is his idea. If he had not thought so, he would have obeyed the command of his Lord, Almighty Allah. It was not only that he refused to prostrate in front of Adam. It was his thinking, 'You are wrong. I am right', which caused Allah's anger. The devil said, 'This comes from you. You make me not obey and not prostrate. You make me do all this.' He accused his Lord instead of accusing himself. What, then, does all this knowledge benefit him?

All those who trust him and follow him, those millions and billions of people, are in the greatest danger. He tricks and cheats them into their own destruction, saying, ‘Oh, people, follow me. I am on the right path. Don’t follow the way of your Lord. I am the first one who refused to walk this way, because it is wrong. Come after me! Follow me! My way is straight and right.’

Whoever follows him has no control over his ego, his *nafs*. There are too many traps on this way. If you avoid one, you will fall into the next. Our egos are like little children. They want to have everything, not knowing if it is harmful or not. They just want it; maybe a pistol or a razor. It may kill them or others, it does not matter to them, they want it. These endless desires are like so many hooks in the hands of the devil. All devils, whether they are the small ones which are with every one of us, as well as the big one, all of them have these hooks. These hooks are in everything which your ego enjoys. When your ego, your *nafs*, likes something, it runs after it. When it runs after it, it falls into a trap.

Therefore, the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him, says, ‘The fire of hell is surrounded by pleasurable things. The ways leading to hell are full of things which our ego likes, and the ways leading to paradise are full of things our ego dislikes.’ If your ego says ‘I don’t like it’, that is a way to paradise. If it says, ‘Oh, I like it very much’, that way leads to hell. Therefore, the devil must build so many traps, use so many tricks. One could fill books with his deceptions, all of which appear lovely to our ego.

Our soul does not like them. But it is imprisoned. It is held in captivity by our ego. When our ego controls us and our bodies, we fall into the hands of the devil. This is because the ego, the *nafs*, is of the same kind as the devil. When they come together like man and woman come together, a new being is born. Its name is ‘Evil’. Thus, crimes and sins are born.

Therefore, all prophets have come to clarify our position. If you do not control your ego, you fall into the hands of the most dangerous enemy of mankind, the devil. From then on you will never be happy, not in this life and not in the next life. Therefore, you must learn to control your ego.

This is the teaching and the training brought by all prophets. The Seal of the Prophets, peace be upon him, taught *and* trained his companions because without training, knowledge is very weak. It is not possible to control one's ego through knowledge only.

In our times you will find many learned people, so many scholars whose knowledge is extremely vast. But they are not trained according to any spiritual discipline. That is the reason why they have no control over themselves. The *ṣaḥābas*, the companions of the Prophet, were, however, both learned and trained. This kind of education continued until the generation following the *ṣaḥābas*. Then a separation between learning and training gradually appeared. Some people still kept both together, but more and more were only interested in learning. The Prophet, peace be upon him, had said: '*rutbatu l-ʿilmi ʿalā rutab*', 'the rank of knowledge marks the highest rank of mankind', and therefore, many people were only interested in learning more and in deepening their knowledge further and further. For there are endless oceans of knowledge. But we also need training. It is one of the traps of the devil to make people ask for more knowledge without training, more knowledge without practice.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, trained his companions through practice. The two commands which are the most difficult and hardest for our ego are firstly, *jihād fi-sabīli llāh*, 'fighting for the sake of Allah', and secondly, *hijrah*, 'emigration'. The Prophet trained his companions in both of them, and they practised them perfectly. This continued for some time, until learning was increasingly divorced from training and continued on its

own. Spiritual training became more and more difficult for such learned people. Especially now, during our time, people continue to reject *ṭarīqabs*. *Ṭarīqabs* have carried on the combined tradition of learning and training which came from the Prophet, peace be upon him, up to the present day. The Sheikhs of *ṭarīqabs* are, therefore, both teachers and trainers. To follow only one of the two is like flying on one wing, which is not possible.

If I read a book that teaches me how to drive a car and then go to a police officer, saying, 'I have just finished reading this book, now, give me a driver's licence', do you think, he will give it to me? He will ask, 'Which mental institution do you come from?' But people think that it is sufficient to read books. They say, 'No need for sheikhs, no need for *ṭarīqabs*.' They are not only one hundred percent, but one thousand percent foolish. If I am not able to control a car without practice, how will I be able to control myself? How will I be able to control my ego?

That is the trouble in the Islamic world today, the trouble amongst Muslims. *Fitnah*, sedition, which comes from the devil. He gives his *fitnah* to many scholars, making them say, 'No *ṭarīqab*. No sheikhs.' However, we say, 'No *ṭarīqab*, no sheikh, no control.' Then you will be the slave of the devil. This is the biggest trap for Muslims at present. Be aware! The level of Islam in the Islamic world is beginning to sink, and very many Muslims are already like non-Muslims. They have no control over themselves. They claim to be worshippers, but they are only worshipping their ego. They are everything but true servants.

I am asking Allah Almighty for forgiveness and for His blessings.

PART TWO

ADVICE TO SERVANTS

The following short chapters should be read in sequence. Read one chapter per day, or read only one sentence from a chapter per day and think about it. It will help you in your fight against your ego.

THE INNER JOURNEY

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*



EVERY MORNING, we wake up to go on a new journey. Its distance is the distance between morning and night. Then we rest until the next morning. When you awake, look for whatever helps you to continue on your way.

The purpose of these words is to show you what is of benefit and what brings harm to you. This is also the aim of the sayings of the Prophet, may peace be upon him, and of the verses of the Holy Qur'an.

It is the same with all Holy Books: Allah Almighty never allows His servant to be harmed. He never leaves him without help. But people believe that they can do without the advice of God, His prophets and their inheritors, the friends of God.

At least their selfish self tells them so. It insists on the satisfaction of its own desires and considers Divine Laws only as so many obstacles. It wants its pleasure here and now, tries to circumvent the advice of Allah, and does not know that even this is only possible with the consent of Allah. If He left us to ourselves even for the blink of an eye, we would be in the greatest danger, for the ego finds pleasure only in what is harmful.

Help comes to us through Allah Almighty's wisdom, through the wisdom of His prophets and through the wisdom of the inheritors of the prophets, the saints. Within Islam the first is found in the Book of Allah, the Holy Qur'an, the second is found

in the *ahādīth*, the sayings of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the third in the sayings and lives of the masters.

The Holy Qur'an consists of 6666 verses, and there are thousands of sayings of the Prophet which were kept and guarded by the *ṣaḥābas*, the companions of the Prophet, and then handed on to following generations.

If you keep only one verse of the Qur'an or one saying of the Prophet in your heart, if you really keep it and always carry it with you, if you think about it and act according to it, it will suffice for your whole life. You do not need anything more. There are many more verses because Islam is so vast, because it exists for all, not only for Arabs, Turks, or other Orientals, but for each human being.

The verses of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet and of his inheritors are like gold mines. Each one of them contains knowledge for the beginner and knowledge for those who are close to the goal. Each one of them contains so much wisdom that one person alone cannot sustain it. Thus, all these verses demand our greatest respect, for knowledge must be respected and honoured.

Knowledge honours us in the Divine Presence. Through it servants learn about and begin to comprehend their Lord. As their knowledge of the greatness and glory of Allah Almighty increases, their respect increases to the same degree, as well as their glorification of Him.

When a servant glorifies Allah Almighty, He blesses him. This blessing comes down upon the servant because he does something which his Lord is not in need of and which neither adds to Him nor diminishes Him. In truth, a servant cannot glorify his Lord, for Allah is glorious beyond measure for all eternity. Even if all of mankind and all the angels glorified Allah Almighty, it would not add one iota to His glory. That is why the worship of a servant who praises his Lord becomes the grace with which the servant is blessed.

When you say *subhāna llāb*, ‘glory be to Allah’, then Allah Almighty sends down favours upon you. Whatever we give, we are given favours accordingly. All creatures glorify Him because He has brought them from nothingness into existence. Not one of them comes forth without praising his Lord. Men, animals, trees, rocks, earth, heavens, clouds, water, atoms, all glorify Him, for without Him they would not be in existence. The more they glorify Him, the more knowledge they are given; and the more knowledge they are given, the more they praise and honour Him.

Both an ordinary man and a saint praise God, yet their worship is very different. For the rank of worship is in accordance with the knowledge of the worshipper. As you truly learn and keep verses of the Qur’an and sayings of the Prophet in your heart, as you sincerely practise them, you will truly increase in knowledge.

In this way you will truly increase in grace and the light which falls upon your station in the Presence of the Divine will increase. New meanings will be opened up for you and they will continue to open as long as you continue to worship and praise Him.

Allah’s order to His servants to glorify Him is a gift. He has ordered us to glorify Him, and has thereby given us the gift of being favoured before His Divine Countenance. When we recite the first verses of the Qur’an, when we say:

‘A’udhu bi-llāhi mina sh-shayṭāni r-rajīm, we glorify Allah, and when we say, *bismi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*, we praise. When we say, *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi rabbi l-‘alamīn*, we glorify, *ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*, we praise You, *māliki yawmi d-dīn*, we praise You, *iyyāka na‘budu wa iyyāka nasta‘īn*, we worship You, *ibdinā s-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīm*, we glorify You, *ṣirāṭa lladbīna an‘amta ‘alayhim gbayri l-maghdūbi ‘alayhim wa lā ḍ-ḍāllīn*, we glorify Allah Almighty, *Amīn*.

Each act of worship and praise, each meaning which is opened to us, is a way. These ways take us to oceans of Divine Knowl-

edge, Divine Wisdom, Divine Beauty. Only worship is important. It is the key that gives Allah's servants their standing in the Presence of the Divine.

Whoever praises his Lord has grace bestowed upon him and becomes a station of Divine Power for others. He will become *āyatun min āyati llāb*, a sign from the signs of God.

THE FIGHT AGAINST OUR EGO

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*



SLAM TEACHES ONLY one thing: how to fight against your ego. This fight is also a way of worshipping Allah Almighty.

We will now take a verse about which our master has spoken very often. This verse mentions one of the worst characteristics of our ego and thus, something which gives it a great deal of pleasure – backbiting.

The ego feeds on it and feeds it. It insists on it and consists of it. It does not want to let go of it under any circumstances and it knows the reason very well. If you take away backbiting and other similar habits to which the ego clings, it will collapse. For the ego is nothing but its attributes. Take them away, and you take it away.

It is a Divine Order to fight against our ego, to catch it, and to force it to surrender. The means for this fight is our will-power. Everyone has this will-power, but only a few use it. It has been given to us to help us in the fight against our ego, and not for any other reason. Will-power has nothing to do with the desire for food, drink, or sex. Those are habits of our animal nature which make themselves felt without will. Will only appears when we try to free ourselves from our habits.

Our body consists of habit patterns and it does not want to give them up willingly. It is averse to praying, to fasting, to

reading the Qur'an, and so, for the performance of any of them, will-power is necessary. If it could, our ego would also turn them into habits and add them to all the others. But this is not possible, and so the ego tries, by hook or by crook, with all its tricks and traps, to deceive you. The clearest sign is your resistance with regard to praying, fasting, keeping ritual purity, and the remembrance of Allah. If you can keep these up only through some effort of your will, take it as a good sign.

Now, here is a verse that says: *You, who believe, do not backbite!* For each act of backbiting is an injury and causes enmity between brothers and friends. However, Islam does not tolerate enmity caused by human beings towards each other. Therefore, the enemy of what is human in man is also the enemy of Islam. Just as the enemy of Islam is also the enemy of mankind.

The enemy of mankind, Satan, is most powerful when he can provoke us to insult and to defame one another. For he knows very well that love between us strengthens Islam and that a strengthened Islam is the greatest helper of mankind. Satan is the biggest and most dangerous enemy of the children of Adam. His aim is the destruction of mankind. But Allah Almighty warns us of him and tells us about the weapons of the destroyer.

As a result, the evil one must find a way to make us savour our own self-destruction. Before the time of the Prophet, may peace and blessings be upon him, Satan even appeared to ordinary people in his true form. Afterwards, this was forbidden to him, and only the friends of God, the saints, see him from time to time. One day a saint met him holding ashes in one hand and a jar of honey in the other. When the devil saw the friend of God, he immediately wanted to turn around and run away. But the saint called him, saying, 'Hey, what's the hurry? Wait a bit and tell me what you've got there in your hand.' The devil answered, 'These are ashes. I'll blow them into the face of an orphan, so his eyes will swell and fill with pus and nobody will want to come

close to him.’ Satan knows, of course, that Allah Almighty has ordered us to take care of orphans. ‘I will blow ashes in their eyes’, he thought, ‘so people will chase them away.’

The saint said, ‘I understand about the ashes, but what is the honey for?’

And Satan answered: ‘Oh, the honey! Wherever people meet, in any association, I will be with them. It doesn’t matter if they are two or more, I like all kinds of gatherings. As soon as I hear of one, I am there with my honey. This isn’t just any old kind of honey, you know. It’s my speciality, home-made. So I take a bit and smear it on their mouths so that their backbiting will be very sweet to them and the words will just melt on their tongues. Then they will be happy, the idiots.’

You have certainly seen how it works. We meet and sit together. Then someone makes a light remark about someone who is not present but whom everybody knows. A second remark follows, this time a little bit stronger, then a third, and one is in the midst of things, one is excited and amused, the atmosphere heats up, we are going full sail, and with full sails we sail into the abyss. The person they are backbiting about is destroyed, and as a result the slanderers themselves are destroyed.

The backbiter harms himself to the same degree that he harms the one who has been denigrated. He destroys himself, destroys humanity, and destroys Islam. Allah Almighty gives a striking image of what happens in His verse.

He asks: ‘Who likes to eat the flesh of his dead brother?’ Whoever has ears to hear will jump up from his slumber and notice what was so pleasantly lulling him to sleep. The Prophet also says that backbiting is like preying on a corpse. You speak about someone absent, someone who cannot defend himself. He is lying there like a corpse in your midst.

In this way Allah Almighty teaches us *adab*, good manners. He says, if you eat from your dead brother’s flesh, you will lose

all honour. Do not participate. Your refusal to participate is a way of glorifying your Lord.

It is not easy to get rid of this terrible addiction. However, even if it takes a long time, do not lose courage. Why do you eat your dead brother's flesh? All ties will be severed between the slanderer and the one who has been defamed. They will never get together and never be friends again.

Fear Allah Almighty, and follow His Prophet. Then you will be able to put this habit aside, as well as all the other terrible habits of your ego.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD OF THE WORLDS

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*



WE ARE SPEAKING about the Knowledge that perceives the Lord of the Worlds. *Shari'ah*, meaning 'street' or 'course' and commonly translated as 'Divine Law' exists for one reason only: to help us to gain knowledge of the Lord of the Worlds, to prepare a way for the children of Adam which brings them closer to their Creator.

Generally, *shari'ah* is only presented as law: that is, as a collection of orders and prohibitions. Following these laws and rules or not following them seems then, to be a matter merely imposed for the sake of them. In other words, you have to comply because God wants it like that. If you follow the law, you will be rewarded by being left as and where you are, and if you do not, you will be punished. The *shari'ah* becomes then, a kind of penal system with higher backing. Because it seems to be much more cruel than our oh-so humanistic modern penal system, it is often and easily used to frighten those away from Islam who show some interest and who would like to understand it.

Amongst all orders and prohibitions there is, however, one that is more basic than all of them, and which colours them all. It is the order, or the offer which Allah Almighty gave us when He gave us understanding. He offered us the possibility of knowing our Creator by giving us His Laws, so that we, by walking alongside them, by thinking about them, can try to come nearer

to Him. Man can sink below the level of animals or rise above it. However, he can only rise above it through the law and not through his own efforts. This is a law which allows him to know his Lord.

Such knowledge is of the greatest importance. Who created us? If we do not know this, or do not want to know, we are not even on the level of animals, for they know their Creator.

The sign that the animals know and follow their Lord is their satisfaction with the way they have been created. No animal complains about its station. That is the doubtful privilege of human beings. A cat is happy to be a cat. It does not want to be a dog. A mouse does not want to be a cat. The snake is a creature without legs, without feet, without wings, but it is content. It does not want to be a donkey. The donkey, although it has to carry heavy loads, although people beat it, still wants to be only a donkey. All creatures are happy and content with their Creator and they know Him. If they did not know Him, they would complain, object, refuse.

The animals know their Creator according to their capacities. But what about man? Man has been given a mind so that he may know his Lord, in a way appropriate for him. Thereby, human beings are able to know themselves and their Lord, and be content with their lot in the same way. Each prophet came with a *sharīʿah* appropriate for his time. In this way, all human beings had the chance to know their Creator. The *sharīʿah* brought by the Seal of Prophets is, according to the Will of God, the last and most perfect testament. Without it, the people of our time are incapable of knowing their Lord and themselves. For they can only know of their Creator to the degree that He makes Himself known to them. This is precisely what happened with the last *sharīʿah*.

Yet, although knowledge may bring a creature very close to contentment with itself and with its Creator, it does not give

complete peace. Love grows from knowledge. The more you hear of someone, the more you understand and know that person, the stronger the desire in your heart will be to go and find him, to be with him. Knowledge is the first step, love is the second. When the believers hear about their Lord through the *sharīʿah*, then, the more they hear of Him, the closer they will want to come to Him. They will want to know where He is and want to go where He is and be where He is.

Nothing is more lovely to them than being with the Beloved. By knowing about Allah Almighty with His perfect attributes, you will want to get up and go and look for Him. The Arabic word for this way, for this search, is *ṭarīqah*.

Nowadays, it is quite common to raise objections against *ṭarīqah*. It is said that *ṭarīqah* is not an expression of true religiousness, and especially not of Islam. It is also said that it is only for people who mistake religion for superstition and flights of fantasy, and cannot see that it consists of sober reasoning and social ethics. Such objections are usually the product of misunderstanding or ignorance. If such people knew that *ṭarīqah* is nothing but the way to Allah Almighty, they would keep quiet.

For, if you have heard of God, if you know Him, how can you stay put on your chair? Does not each chair on which you sit, each spot where you are, become a fire driving you towards the Beloved?

Whoever has heard of the Kaaba, of the House of the Lord, whoever knows about it, will set heaven and earth in motion to reach this sacred place. But there are two groups of people running to the House of the Lord. One is on its way to the House of the Lord, the other is on its way to the Lord of the House.

Each will find what it is looking for. The first group is bigger, the second is given more honour in the Divine Presence.

Sharīʿah leads to the House of the Lord, *ṭarīqah* leads to the Lord of the House. That is all.

To know of the Lord of the Worlds, you do not need to pay attention to particular objects only, you do not have to study selected fields. All and everything gives tidings and knowledge of its Creator. Turn towards what you find and learn from it. Learn to know your Lord.

Maybe you think that *ṭarīqab*, the way to the Lord of the House, is long and difficult for you, especially in the beginning. But when you ask Allah Almighty for help, He will make your way easy. This is one of His attributes. If you put yourself into His hands, He will make things light for you.

Shari'ah is necessary because it lays the foundation for our personality. But the perfection of this personality and the fulfillment of our destiny which consists in being a perfect servant can only be reached through *ṭarīqab*.

A BLOSSOM
IN THE HEARTS OF MANKIND

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*

NOW CAN IT HAPPEN that in our time precisely those who are so much concerned about the reality of things show such little interest in Sayyidinā Muḥammad? Or, how is it, that where they show some interest, they are so careless in their research? How can it happen that in Western countries, where so much time is spent in thinking about the world in which we live, about its future, and about the conditions of life, hardly any serious study about the Seal of Prophets has been published? It seems strange that the scholars and thinkers display such sloppiness in this regard as well as a kind of prejudice which is irreconcilable with their established principles of science.

It is really surprising! If they are so much concerned about reality, why do they not notice Islam? Or, why is Islam not a reality for them? Why do they look at it, wishing that it should rather not exist? Already a quick glance shows that Islam is a reality. It is spread over the whole earth, it has more than one billion followers from all nations, from all levels of society. If there is nothing to it, how then, are all these people attracted by it? How has it been able to touch their hearts, their minds, and their senses, if it is nothing, or just an old-fashioned mixture of antiquated things?

The scholars and thinkers should think quietly and calmly about it. If they are sincere with themselves, if they are really

concerned about reality, they should think about the reality of Islam.

There are so many reasons and during our time a new reason has appeared. For centuries, Islam was restricted to Islamic territory. But in our century, in the century of freedom and of human rights, the surprising fact is that exactly in those countries where freedom and human rights are most widely spread, people are coming into Islam. The number is not important. There may be hundreds or thousands. (Of course, one may hold against this the fact that there are still millions who do not show the slightest interest in Islam.) What is important and significant is the evidence that, despite all this freedom and liberality, so many people, especially young ones, are turning towards the last testament, the last message of Allah Almighty.

It is even more surprising when one sees the hate and the contempt showered on Islam by religious leaders and scholars of the Western world. Their only aim has been to prevent simple people from recognising Islam as a true way, a true religion, a reality. Usually, people judge by appearances, and certain features of these appearances have been used to lead them by the nose. The current opinion about Islam and its Prophet still prevailing today, has been formed by people who were brought up to hate Islam without knowing the reason for this hatred. Why are they opposed to Islam, what is wrong with it? Which one of its rules harms mankind? Which of its injunctions dishonours man or attacks his honour?

There is no answer. At one point the blockade of thought is fortified by a blockade of speech. Despite our claims about human rights, freedom of thought and freedom of speech, certain things are still not allowed to be said. Or, they are so well and so deeply ignored that it does not occur to anyone how they could be banished from our consciousness. Because what does not exist cannot be forbidden, can it? Like the fact that people are against

Islam because it does not accept the Crucifixion of Christ nor the dogma that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

In this way, the hatred which thrives on the ignorance of its own origin is further nourished, not with standing the liberal gesture of opening the dialogue of religions. What kind of dialogue could this be? How will they be able to speak with one another, when at the same time each one is unwilling to accept the other as a reality? Added to this, it is always overlooked that Jesus Christ counts as one of the greatest prophets, and that Islam places him on the same level as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Muḥammad, may peace and blessings be upon all of them.

We are inviting the scholars and thinkers in Western countries to take a look at the life of Muḥammad, to look at his actions and deeds, to see the building he established. If they are not able to recognise the hand of a Prophet in these, they may, at least, see that he was a great man, a very wise person.

Each one of his sayings is a sign of wisdom. What is the source of wisdom? Wisdom comes from a pure heart. A heart which is dark and dull cannot receive it. If they recognise wisdom in him, then we would like to ask them if, in their opinion, a wise man can lie? Does not wisdom exclude lying?

The pronunciation of a single statement of wisdom is sufficient to make any lie from such a person impossible. He nourishes himself from heaven, but lies are found underground. How, then, can the one who has addressed so many nations with so many millions of *abadith* be a liar when he says, 'I am a Prophet'?

This should make the scholars and thinkers think. All lies are unearthed at one time or another. Now, fifteen centuries have passed since the Seal of Prophets appeared on this earth. His influence has not decreased, but increased. During our time, it is even entering the hearts of the people in Western countries. This is, in our eyes, more important than the developments within Islam in Islamic countries. The people in those

countries are born Muslims and live in an environment which is still largely Islamic. They do not have to discover Islam. They have enough on their hands with practising it the way it was laid down. But Islam is blossoming in Western countries under the most unfavourable circumstances, in the hearts of men and women who are often surrounded by fanatical enemies of anything religious. This is truly remarkable.

We are inviting the religious leaders of Christianity and the scholars to think seriously. If they really care about a solution to the most pressing problems, if they are really concerned with reality, then they should take a look at Islam. It will change their hearts.

THE STAR OF MUḤAMMAD

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*



ALLAH ALMIGHTY BLESSES His Prophet and glorifies him for all eternity. Whoever belongs to the community of Muḥammad should thank Allah Almighty, for this is a gift and a grace from his Lord. He is the First. Allah Almighty is the First. Amongst all creatures, Sayyidunā Muḥammad, peace be upon him, is the first.

No one knows when the beloved Prophet of God was created. On the Night Journey, the *mi‘rāj*, Allah Almighty invited him into His Divine Presence. He reached the place beyond which no creature can go. Its name is *sidrat al-muntabā*. This place is the station of the Angel Gabriel, that is, the Angel of the Intellect. Here, the knowledge of creatures ends. Everything the mind understands must finally come to this point and must come to a halt there.

When the Prophet, peace be upon him, reached this point, he saw a very bright star rising on the horizon whose brilliance struck him. He asked Gabriel about it and the angel answered, ‘This is the star that rises once every seven thousand years from this horizon. Up to this very day I have seen it rise seven thousand times. It is so beautiful that I can hardly take my eyes off it, but I do not know whose star it is.’

The Prophet answered, ‘This is my star, through which my light shines. Dear star, you are there to show me that I am the

first creature created by Allah Almighty.³ – The Prophet preceded Gabriel. Gabriel saw, but he did not understand. Allah knows how often the star had risen before the creation of Gabriel.

The Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, is the first creature, and his community was created before all others, although both were sent last. They were sent so that the time could be fulfilled.

The blessing of Allah Almighty rests on the community, the *ummah*, of Muḥammad. It was created at the beginning of time and was kept in a state of waiting. Then, Allah in His endless mercy, decreed that it should come forth at the end of this age, so that it would not have to remain hidden and wait any longer for the day of its appearance in this world.

Is there a burden heavier than the burden of waiting? So many communities of so many prophets have waited thousands of years for the sign which allowed them to appear. The time is fulfilled. We are now living in the fifteenth century of the Islamic calendar. The Day of Justice is close and life on this earth will not continue beyond this century. The Day of Judgement is approaching. We thank God for not letting us wait any longer and for calling us into life at this time.

On the Day of Judgement, Allah Almighty's glance will fall on Muḥammad's nation first of all. When this mustering has taken place, Muḥammad, may peace and blessings be upon him, will be the first one to cross the bridge over the abyss of Hell, and his nation will be the first *ummah*, the first group to enter paradise. None of the other prophets will enter before the last one of Muḥammad's people has entered. Then, the others will follow.

It is such an honour to belong to the nation of Sayyidīnā Muḥammad, but who is aware of this honour, who thinks about it, who shows any gratitude? The other prophets knew it very well, and they asked their Lord to count them amongst Muḥammad's nation. They asked, 'Oh, my Lord, let me be one

of Muḥammad's children. Gladly, would I give up my prophethood for the honour of being the last one of his children.'

But we are forgetful and we forget to thank Allah Almighty for His gift. Did He not take us into the fold of this community even before we asked Him to?



KNOW THYSELF

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*



IT DOES NOT MATTER how many people come together in a meeting. Two, or three, hundreds, thousands, or millions. Allah Almighty is with each association. The strength we derive from faith comes from knowing this. When those who associate come together in the clear knowledge of the Presence of their Lord, then they will behave accordingly. Those who want to reach reality in this life, on this earth, must walk on their way knowing that their Lord is with them wherever they are. For He is their Creator and their Guide on the way to reality.

As long as the seeker is on the way, his Lord is with him. He never leaves him. If Allah Almighty, disappeared, then the way and the one who walks on it would disappear too. It is difficult for us to understand or to imagine what Allah Almighty is like and how He is able to always be with us.

Once, a Jew came to Sayyidinā ‘Alī and asked him, ‘What kind of a Lord is your Lord? What is He like?’ And Sayyidunā ‘Alī answered, ‘How can you ask what the One who gave existence to the ‘how’ is like? *Alladhī kayyaf al-kayf, lā yus’al ‘anbu kayf.*’

That is why you cannot reach this reality merely through being informed about it. What is it like, where is it and which way leads there? Even if it was possible to answer these questions, it would not enable you to take even one step. The question about

Allah Almighty cannot be answered if it is asked in this way. Whoever asks it must begin by starting out on the way. The starting point, however, does not begin with the question about your Lord, but with the question about yourself.

Leave the question about your Lord and ask: 'Who am I? Where have I come from?' Why don't you ask? You came from two channels. Do you remember? Then, you came together in the womb of your mother. Do you remember? You don't? You came out of your mother's womb and you do not remember. Where have you come from? Ask! Ask this question first. The first station of knowledge is the knowledge of yourself. When you have reached it, you may ask about your Lord. That is why our Prophet, peace be upon him, says, 'The knowledge of your Lord comes from the knowledge of yourself. *Man 'arifa nafsabū, fa qad 'arifa rabbabū.*' That is the first step.

As it is very difficult to see how Allah Almighty is always with us, He sends His representatives to us. The last one of these representatives, that is to say, the one who was sent by Allah to the people of our time and for the remaining time until the end of time, was Muḥammad Rasūlullāh, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

There are two testimonies of Islam. The first is: *lā ilāha illā Llāh*, there is no god except Allah. The second is: *Muḥammadun Rasūlullāh*, Muḥammad is the messenger of Allah. No one can take his place for all eternity. Just as Allah Almighty is without a partner, so is Muḥammad, peace be upon him. Muḥammad is of mankind but his face is turned unswervingly towards the Face of his Lord. The steadfastness of his gaze belongs to his real being in the Divine Presence. Here on earth there is only a ray, a small ray of the reality of Muḥammad. We cannot understand or bear more than this.

Accordingly, we have someone to see and to understand, someone to speak with, to sit with, to go with, someone we can

meet. Allah Almighty sends us His emissary. We may not be able to see him, but it is not beyond our imagination to imagine him in our midst, for whatever is invisible may become visible. The easiest way to be aware of such a presence is through the presence of the Friends of God, the saints.

A *murīd*, that is, someone asking for reality, must be aware of this. He may have much knowledge or little, depending on the length of the way he has gone, but the certainty of the Divine Presence is absolutely necessary for him. It encourages him to proceed on his way and it teaches him to be careful and well-mannered.

My Master, may Allah bless him, asked his *murīds* to take him with them wherever they went. Once I was walking in the streets of Damascus, when suddenly someone came towards me from across the street. He waved to me, and when I stopped, he asked me about my master. I told him as much as I could. After a while I begged to take my leave, and the man let me go, asking me to convey his greetings to my master and giving me some sweets for the way. When I returned to my master, I told him that I had met such and such a person and that he sent his greetings. Then I took the sweets out of my pocket to give them to my master. He asked, 'Where are yours?' 'Mine? Oh, these are mine. I am giving them to you.' I don't want yours, oh, Nazim Efendi, I want mine', he replied.

'When you walk alone, you must take me with you. When someone gives you something, you must say, "Thank you very much, this is for me and this is for my Sheikh. I am not alone."'

This is simple advice, but it bears much meaning. Whoever heeds it will always be careful in his actions, and he will walk with the awareness that his master is always with him. He can call on him for help when he is in need. His Sheikh will support and defend him. If he walks alone, then he will have to meet

everything alone. If he goes with his master, then none of the devils will dare to approach him.

This holds true for your whole life. You should never take one step without a person endowed with spiritual power being next to you. Such a person can appoint one of his or her own spiritual bodies to accompany you. This can be done for one or for many. A true master, a Grandsheikh, can in this way be with all of his disciples, even if there are hundreds of thousands of them.

This is extremely important for our spiritual life. As long as you are not such a fighter that people fear you, as long as you are not like Sayyidinā ‘Umar, whom the devil tried to avoid, you will need someone to guide you; you will need someone to support you in all of your actions, in all of your worship.

When you do not just imagine that you can walk alone but when you are really capable of going on the path by yourself, then you must help those who do not know how to help themselves against the attacks of the enemy of mankind.

ASSOCIATION

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*



ARĪQATUNĀ AŞ-ŞUḤBAH *wa-l-kbayru fi-l-jam'iiyah.*
Our way is the way of companionship, and everything good comes from being together. These are the words of Shah Naqshband, the founder and the pillar of the Most Distinguished Naqshbandi Way. May Allah Almighty bless him and grant him closeness.

Wa kūnū ma'a ṣ-ṣādiqīn [9:119]: 'be with the sincere Ones'. This is a Holy Order. Allah Almighty obliges us to seek out one of these true human beings and to follow them.

We live in a time where people mostly follow those who follow their egos. Promises from their side are most welcome. If possible, we would always like to choose the way which is easiest and most pleasant to us, that is, to our ego.

This, however, is extremely dangerous because the ego never leads to a true way. It prefers falseness, for it is not motivated by truth, but by its own advantage. Whoever wants to find the truth cannot follow his ego. True ways are narrow but false ones are wide. The ego prefers such ways because it does not want to commit itself, it likes to try a bit here and a bit there – this and that.

Following along true ways has to be learned. To learn this, you need a guide. You cannot be that guide because, when you are alone, Satan and the army of his helpers will attack you. You cannot escape, for they will get you and force you to follow

them, whether you like it or not. Once you go with them, you are finished.

But if you are in the company of a true human being, Satan and his volunteers will not approach you, because they fear the sacred, divine power of such a person. Let a true guide lead you through your life. Without him, it is too dangerous. Each time we leave the way we will be punished. This punishment may come sooner or later, but it cannot be avoided. All the suffering and misery which descends upon mankind is the result of their ceasing to follow true human beings. They no longer know what is happening to them and why it happens. That is their real suffering – not what happens to them, but their not knowing whence it comes and for which purpose.

If they followed a true human being, they would know that everything which happens to them is for their benefit. For they would know that nothing happens without the will and the knowledge of their Lord and they could then be content and bear it, even if it was difficult and unpleasant. We may not understand the wisdom contained in events, but we may know that there is wisdom in them. Whoever recognises this, will have a heart which is at rest, for he knows that all will be well.

Allah Almighty orders us, therefore, in all Holy Books, from Adam to Sayyidinā Muḥammad, peace be upon them and upon all prophets, *Yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ittaqū llāha wa kūnū ma‘a ṣ-ṣādiqīn* [9:119]. Nothing has changed about this verse, about this, ‘Oh, you who believe, fear Allāh and be with the people of truth.’ It is as true today as it was then and it will be true until the Last Day.

Which one of you, when you wake up in the morning, asks his Lord, ‘Oh, Lord, let me meet one of Your true servants today’? Who asks Him, ‘Oh, my Lord, let me find one of Your hidden friends, one of Your saints’! Whoever seeks will find, and whoever asks will be answered.

The hearts of the people of truth are free from all evil and all illness. Illness of the heart brings death: that is, the death that leaves a dead body behind. When we die, we go to find true life. We do not come into this life only to eat, drink and satisfy our sexual desires. The true reason for our being here is the search for true life.

Nobody finds eternal life whose heart is ill. When the heart is healed, it lives the true life, because the secret of the true life is lowered into it. He whose heart does not die, his body does not become dust.

Keeping company with a true human being is being on the path with one whose heart is whole and well. In this way your own heart is healed. Whoever has already found eternal life in this life, his body remains in the grave as it was on earth. He appears in it on the Day of Judgement, and his sign will be, *'alā manabirīn min nūr*, 'sitting on thrones of light'.

Is there anything more important than to seek real life? Do not say, 'How shall I find these people of truth?' Your heart will tell you.



WAYS TO THE HEAVENS

*In the Name of Allah Almighty,
Most Beneficent and Most Munificent.*



ASSOCIATION WITH THE SHEIKH is the essence of the Distinguished Naqshbandi Way. Without this link there is no way. Without a way, you cannot reach Allah Almighty.

This way is a way of knowing. Each man and woman is obliged to try to know herself, himself, and to recognise their position in this life, on this earth, and in this universe. For this reason we have been given understanding. So we must try to understand and to be understanding. This is only incumbent upon those who have been given understanding.

There are two ways in which we can know about ourselves. One is the knowledge of the body. It is not too difficult, only a question of time and of the quantity of knowledge. Although neither an amateur nor a specialist can know everything about the body down to the smallest detail, we are, nevertheless, justified in saying that we possess knowledge of our bodies and that to the extent that we are identical with our bodies, we are able to know ourselves.

Then, we know a little bit about ourselves through our relationship to other bodies. What is the character of the Earth? Why is it so suitable for the children of Adam? How is it that the children of Adam are to be found exclusively on this planet? Who chose it for them? Is it by accident that they live here or by

design? Such questions are important, because through them we learn about ourselves.

Now, the universe does not only consist of physical bodies, but also of spiritual ones. An indication for this is found in our dreams. Our physical body rests while we run, see, hear, eat and smell. How is this possible if there is only one body? How can we see, when our eyes are closed, how are we able to run, when we are lying on our beds? Is there perhaps a second body, a second being? We call this second body the spiritual body, or our spiritual being.

We cannot know about this body or being, as we were able to know about ourselves in the first case. Usually, we are identified with a self that lives through the physical body only. This is the ego. Knowledge of a second body, of our spiritual body is possible only to the degree that this identification begins to be disentangled. This process begins when the fight against the ego reaches a certain level. As not many are willing to give up the luxuries of the ego and its world and to fight against it, and as even less reach the level of disentanglement, only a small number of human beings possesses such knowledge. They live in the uppermost floor of the building of mankind. The height of their apartment determines the view. All men live on this planet, but their living-spaces are different. Because of this, their views are different: some are short-sighted, others are long-sighted. He who lives on the roof may tell those living in the basement what he can see. Most human beings live in the basement, and if they do not strive to get out they must spend their whole life there. Whoever wants to get out has to search for inhabitants of the roof. We cannot obtain spiritual knowledge by ourselves, because we are sitting with our egos in the basement of ourselves. When the roof-people come to us, they speak of this and that view, of this and that knowledge, and they ask us to come with them because they want to show us what they see. Whoever

listens to them, whoever believes them and gets up in order to follow them, will see. The lines of the prophets, and thereby prophethood as such is completed. Nothing can be added and there will be no further prophet. But this does not mean that all possibilities for following prophets, especially the Seal of Prophets, are cut off. The last Prophet stands at the horizon of the children of Adam. He stands at the last horizon, there will be none after him.

If you follow a prophet in sincerity, you must finally reach his level, his view, his knowledge. If you do not follow any of them, that is, if you do not follow any human being who is sustained and moved by divine attributes, you will live in the basement and die in the basement.

If you intend to get up and follow one of them, you must be careful, for there are many impostors and charlatans. But if you find a true human being, then stay with him or with her and accompany them on their way. They will guide you to their level and show you further universes beyond the horizon of our universe.

Do not say, 'This takes too long and is too difficult.' If it causes too much discomfort to you, if it is too wearisome, if you prefer to stay here, if you like it very much here, if it is good enough the way it is, if you say, 'What shall I do with all these fairy-tales, I'll stick to what I know and try to get along', then you had better understand clearly what you are saying. You are saying that you prefer to die in filth and to be buried amongst pigs. However, he whose heart asks day in, day out, and he who follows it, will have a view opened to him.

There are *ṭarīqahs*, there are Ways of the Heavens, which allow their seekers to feast their eyes from time to time while they are still on their way. They need this as a kind of incentive. But the most distinguished Naqshbandi Way does not use such methods. On the contrary, it keeps the eyes of those who walk

its way from swerving. In this way, it keeps them on their path. For it happens quite often that someone fascinated by the sights along the wayside forgets the goal – the arrival in the Divine Presence. The Naqshbandi Way leads its seekers, its *murids* to their horizon, to their destination, without offering tempting promises. Only when they reach the station of safety, are their eyes opened. Then they see and then they know that this is the last horizon.

Here everything is made clear for everybody. You are free. We all live in the same building. You are free to live in the basement or on the roof. May our way be guided by love and may our feet be moved by the desire for the One.

All praise belongs to the Lord of the Worlds.

PART THREE

WORDS TO
KEEP IN OUR HEARTS

APHORISMS
AND STORIES



ONCE UPON A TIME, a master of our way invited his disciples to a picnic. Such things are important for this way because they keep the disciples on the path by keeping them amused. After having found a good place to rest and for refreshment, the master asked everybody where they had found him. All remembered and told him the place. There were as many places as there were disciples. Suddenly, the master disappeared. They all looked, but found nobody. All of a sudden, his voice was heard. It said, 'After having found me once, look for me again!' But because it came from all directions at the same time, they did not know where to look for him and ran in all directions without success. After a while, when they had already given up, the voice was heard again, 'Why, after having found me before, can't you find me, now?' It is like this, we think we are seeking, however we are sought. We think we find but we are found.

* * *

I DO NOT CHANGE ANYONE, I do not add to anyone. I only pass on Divine Knowledge. I give from you to you, from within yourself. I make connections.

* * *

HONOUR SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN for merely recognising the truth, it should be given to the one who accepts it.

* * *

IF YOU LOOK INTO THE SUN, your eyes hurt. Therefore, the Christians, the Jews, and even most of the Muslims in our days avoid looking at the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him.

* * *

ALL THINGS ARE CREATED to teach man. They teach him, 'Look, everything around you is in balance. You must keep this balance. It is the balance of life: the balance of physical life and of spiritual life. Two scales. As long as one is full and the other one empty, as long as there is more in one than in the other, you will not be at peace. As long as your spiritual being is unhappy, it will not carry the weight of the body. As soon as you are balanced, Heaven and Earth are your neighbours.

* * *

PERFECTION IS NOT a matter of making claims. There are signs for perfection. He who reaches spiritual perfection will find himself in his own world. This world is his inner life. In his world he finds what he has been searching for, that is, what belongs to him. There, in this inner world, he will know himself and when he knows himself, he will begin to know the Divine.

* * *

WHY DO YOU NOT LEARN from trees and flowers? They are, like all creatures, created to serve creation. But we are like poisoned thorns. We do not like ourselves and we do not like each other. We do not like ourselves because we stubbornly poison our souls.

* * *

MY TASK and the task of all those who are on my level is to make you believe. This is the task of the masters. It is not possible to believe in something without believing in someone. For,

to listen the heart must be open. Whoever listens believes in someone and believes that this person can teach him what he cannot know, see, reach, or be by himself. Such belief brings you the love of the one to whom you are listening. By believing, you learn how to love. By believing, you learn to obey. By loving, you are on the way to obedience. For true obedience is not possible without love. Whoever is forced to obey will never obey, and true obedience leads to the Divine Presence.

* * *

IF YOU DO NOT NOTICE nearness and do not notice it coming nearer, if your soul does not ask daily for the beloved, nothing has happened. You are playing. You are wasting your time.

* * *

IN THESE TIMES, you may reach one out of ten thousand, not more. People do not help you, and when a patient does not help his doctor, he cannot be cured. This applies to our ways. If you do not help me, I cannot help you.

* * *

CLAIMING TO BE RIGHT, even if you are right, extinguishes the light of faith in your heart.

* * *

TO FOLLOW SUFI WAYS, must I be a Muslim? Do you think that Christians are not Muslims? Perhaps they are. To be a Muslim means to be an obedient servant of your Lord. 'Muslim' is only an Arabic word for this. Why are you afraid of this word?

Worship your Lord. Worship is part of a special relationship between you and your Lord.

* * *

SOMETIMES A LITTLE FISH asks its mother, 'Mother, where is the ocean?', and she answers, 'Show me where there is no ocean, and I will show you the ocean.'

* * *

THE FIGHT AGAINST YOUR EGO is terrible and full of dangers. You cannot fight it by yourself but you must find someone who has won this fight and can show you what to do. Never meet your ego head-on. If you say to it: 'I'm declaring war on you', then you are finished. You must flatter it. The ego is suspicious so you must show it your friendly side by saying, 'I like you more than anything in this world.' Then its tyranny will soon be over. Those who challenge this rule are swallowed immediately.

* * *

THERE ARE BILLIONS OF PEOPLE on this earth and each one of them has been given his particular fantasies. Everyone imagines things differently. All of mankind's fantasies and imagination are worthless. True value lies in true knowledge. The knowledge coming to us from the prophets is not imagination. We can accept it as it is. The prophets are authorised to speak to everyone according to his level of understanding. So, there is no need to say that something is like this or like that. We can accept it the way it comes. We believe and act accordingly.

* * *

YOU ARE BURNING. And what burns you is love, or it is fire.

* * *

HERE ON THIS EARTH nothing is yours. What is yours is beyond space and time. Look for it there.

* * *

WE ARE AUTHORISED to meet everyone. They may be educated or uneducated, young or old, peasant or politician, Christian, Jew, or Muslim, they may be scholars of religion or dervishes. Whichever way they follow, whichever school they belong to we give as much as they can take.

* * *

WE DO NOT PREPARE SPEECHES. We do not look into books or notes to find the right words. We take from the hearts and give to the hearts. Why should we prepare if the ones we have been waiting for do not appear, or if a bird appears and immediately leaves? We want you to understand. We are not in love with brilliant ideas, so that people can say, 'What a great scholar, what meaningful words, what important thinking, what a giant amongst theologians.' Important for us is that you understand. A helicopter may land anywhere, the Concorde needs a special airport. Give honour to the scholars. However, we are humble, we only need your attention.

* * *

THE MESSAGE which the Seal of Prophets, Sayyidunā Muḥammad, brought from his Lord Allah Almighty is for all people until the end of time. It is perfect, it does not need any improvement.

* * *

MOVE IN THE WAY of the fish. If you understand this, then the whole world may be pulled away from under your feet and it will not disturb you. Why do you need ground under your feet? You are free.

* * *

IF YOU REFUSE ALL and accept the One, you are not proud. If you accept all and refuse the One, you are proud.

* * *

USE YOUR MIND and your eyes. When you look at Islam, do not listen to your ego. Your mind will tell you that Islam does not oppose mankind. It opposes your ego.

* * *

WE ARE HOLDERS of the attributes of God, not His partners.

* * *

WHAT SHALL I DO with the parts of a watch if I do not know their place? Everything is with us, all the components are there, but we do not know where they fit.

* * *

THE DIFFERENCE between you and your master is that you are proud.

* * *

YOU PRAY, but in your heart is jealousy. You pray, and in your heart is love for this life. You pray, and in your heart is selfishness. Sixty bad qualities can be in your heart. If only one of them stays, it is sufficient to destroy your faith.

* * *

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to control technology through thought. It is too fast for thinking.

* * *

HUMILITY SUSTAINS HEARTS. Therefore, the hearts of the prophets bring people together. Pride makes them flee from each other.

* * *

EDUCATION IN THE MODERN WORLD educates only towards selfishness. Which school should we send our children to so that they may learn that everything belongs to all of us?

* * *

STRENGTH DOES NOT CONSIST in strong words or deeds. It consists in your being able to bear everything in this life, good

or bad, with equal courage. If you run away from something, you are only running from bad to worse. Whatever happens to you marks you. Nothing helps but patience.

* * *

AS LONG AS YOU ARE CONNECTED with everyone, you must endure everyone. Do you know what you are asking for, if you want someone to suit your wishes? One false link in the chain falsifies all. Each attempt to change one link in the chain changes all. Therefore, physical control over others is impossible.

* * *

A HUMAN BEING thinks with the head, intends with the heart and acts with the organs.

* * *

DURING THE DAY *or at night*, take a bath, sit quietly and say in silence, 'My God, I have left everything, everything, except You. Now, I am with You. I know that You will never leave me, that You are always with me. But I am not with You and now I would like to be with You, if only for a little while. A while, my God, I will sit with You, looking at You, listening to You, doing what I do only for You, and being only for You.'

* * *

'I AM A MUSLIM', means, 'I have stopped fighting against the Will of my Lord, and I promise never again to quarrel with Him.'

* * *

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTIC of the West is speed. There, one also wants a speedy cure, even though our illness has been building up over a long time.

* * *

THIS IS A MEETING witnessed by our Lord. The angels bear witness, and we are witnesses to each other.

* * *

ALL OUR LIVES we run after Light. Without it we cannot live, without it we cannot serve our Lord. Without it we do not know what is coming towards us, in this life and in the next.

* * *

I SAW YOU, my brother, my sister, how you came out of your houses, running. You must run after someone or something; you must want to catch it. Did you catch it today? They say, 'No, tomorrow we will try and catch it.' But they die without having caught it, and we carry them to their graves because they cannot carry themselves. They put their burden on our shoulders, and we carry them. However, I say, 'Brother, sister, walk. Why do you want to be carried to your grave?' But they say, 'Be quiet, you know what has happened to us.'

* * *

ALLAH'S MERCY has left a door open. One door. This door is for those who, without having asked and without knowing why,

are seized by the Love of God and by the desire to know Him, although it is like trying to hold a glowing coal in your hand.

* * *

HE WHO GOVERNS SPACE is more powerful than those who govern on earth. Therefore, people fear the presence of life in space. But He who is higher than space governs both space and earth.

* * *

IN OUR DAYS who would be likely to say, 'Please let this one or that one be as beautiful, or as powerful, or as intelligent as I am?'

* * *

AS LONG AS YOU ARE OPPOSED to yourself, you do not like yourself. So, you become jealous and proud. Then, people do not like you and avoid you, and what happens to you will happen to them.

* * *

PERHAPS YOU ARE VERY BEAUTIFUL, very rich, very intelligent. But there are always others who are more beautiful, richer, and more intelligent. This hurts you. For you want to be the only living being on this earth. You want to be the only one, the only beautiful one, the only rich person, the only intelligent one in this world.

* * *

AT FIRST, we are busy with our bodies, then we are busy with our businesses. Finally we are busy with the future of our children, in order to stay busy. Our whole life consists in being busy. 'That leaves no time for myself', we say.

* * *

TECHNOLOGY KEEPS MANKIND IMPRISONED through a simple trick. It keeps them in fear. It says, 'If I go, then you are finished.' However, it is made with our own hands. Everything comes from our two hands.

* * *

THEY SAY, 'HE DIED.' What does this mean? It means, he was taken away. The Divine spark was taken from him. Then he is nothing.

* * *

RIFLES, TANKS, AND BOMBS may stop people but they cannot stop their ego. It knows such weapons only too well and is not afraid of them. Only the Oneness of Allah teaches fear. Only to Him does the ego submit.

* * *

YOU SHOULD BE LIKE A DOG with your master. Why? When you shout at a dog, when you beat him, throw stones at him, chase him, he runs away. When you call him he comes back; a hundred times, without resentment. When your master calls you back, and you are even slightly annoyed, then you are not a true disciple, but an imitator. Therefore, the master will always

try you, with everything. Your hearts should never turn away from him, that is, if you belong to those who ask. For you do not ask for this or for that, you ask for the One.

* * *

WHOEVER REFUSES to feed his soul is cruel. Our soul nourishes itself through obedience to its Lord. If you take away its nourishment, you shorten your life.

* * *

WHATEVER SERVES YOUR SELFISHNESS goes against God. What God says, goes against your selfishness.

* * *

THE ONENESS OF GOD is the basis of all prophetic religions. It is the criterion with which to distinguish a false prophet from a true one. He who calls people to the Oneness of God calls them to the true way and is a true emissary of God Almighty. He who does not call them to this way, but who calls them to another or to others, does not follow a heavenly way but runs after his ego.

* * *

WE ARE NOT HUMBLE ENOUGH to ask. We spend our lives on this planet, inquisitively and proudly inquiring about it and everything on it. Our knowledge is knowledge of that which appears. Our inquirers and learned people are learned only in the apparent. But what is real is hidden. It is not on this planet, it is difficult to reach. As they want to know everything, but are not humble enough to ask, the imitation of knowledge is on the

increase and is spreading over the whole world. Everything is being imitated, even thoughts and wisdom.

* * *

WHAT SHALL I SAY about myself? I am like the moon. When the sun goes, the light of the moon goes. If the light of my master leaves me, I am in darkness. I am nothing. Whoever sees me as this one or as that one, sees me through the light of my master.

* * *

IF WE DO NOT FIND THE KEY that opens us, nothing will be opened to us.

* * *

AS LONG AS YOU ARE IN CONTACT with yourself you are at peace, and everything suits you. But if you leave yourself, if you run away from yourself, everything that comes your way puts you to shame and makes you suffer. Each step of your life is painful. A friend of God is within himself, with himself. If someone is present to himself in such a way, everything with him and everything around him changes, for he is with his Lord.

* * *

OUTSIDE, THINGS MAY BE as they are, but inside you must find what you are familiar with. You cannot change the world outside, for it is like frozen air. But inside you can light a fire.

* * *

LEAVE YOUR SHOES at the door and rest.

* * *

WE ONLY NEED one friend. One who gives us more than we need and who gives us strength, so we are able to trust. One who gives us strength, so we are able to keep that trust, and to keep peace in our hearts. One who gives us strength, so we are able to hold still with ourselves. Why do we seek more friends? Why do we seek useless friends?

* * *

WHY DO WE NOT SEE that which is closest to us? Why do we prefer to overlook that which is best for us? Out of envy. The first child will always envy the second, and the first two will envy the third. Envy does not want to know and does not know. This is also the story of the religions. Which Jew thinks of Christianity when looking for help? Which Christian thinks of Islam? No, what you turn to must be as far away as possible. India, or Tibet may do. There are also God jumpers, from envy.

* * *

AS LONG AS YOU CLAIM SOMETHING, you must endure something. If you own a little piece of earth, just big enough to stand on, little snow will fall on you. The more space you need, the more that falls on you, the more you must accept. The Ways of Heaven are ways of travelling light. Therefore, all of your burdens, one after the other, have to be taken from you. You cannot lay them down yourself, for they are important to you, important claims. Claims to be something and someone. Claims

to be a doctor, a businessman, an architect, an artist. Claims to be oneself, claims to be. The more you claim, the more you must undergo. Become less. Become less, until you have vanished. Then you are free.

* * *

ISLAM DOES NOT ADVOCATE the use of force on others. Force yourself: that is the highest degree. Urge yourself on and do not wait until someone pushes or pulls you. Animals have to be moved, a human being can move himself.

* * *

IF, WHILE SPEAKING, your ego speaks, if, while acting, your ego acts, if, while acting and speaking, you only present yourself, you can never really reach others. This vanity of yours makes you artificial and forced. It makes you tired and tiresome. Because you have nothing, you have nothing to give. Only a selfless person reaches hearts. The words and deeds of such a person pierce the heart like an arrow.

* * *

WHEN THE HOUR COMES at the end of time, everything will have lost its way. Everything will be walking in the wrong direction. Everything will have changed its direction. When people change their intention, they change their direction. They do this because they do not know that there is only one direction. When you know which one, your life will be light on you and you will be light for it.

* * *

YOU CANNOT REACH PERFECTION, perfect goodness, perfect light, perfect happiness, perfect peace, perfect satisfaction in this life and in the next, without paying the price.

* * *

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE is like the Earth, and the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an is like Heaven. The Earth cannot carry the Heavens. But the knowledge of the destination of each human being is Heavenly Knowledge.

* * *

BECAUSE WE ARE IN DARKNESS we ask for light. Because we are obscured from ourselves we ask for illumination. But knowledge by itself is not enlightening. Illumination comes from someone who is enlightened. You have a candle, so many of you have candles, but what are your candles worth if you do not find anything to light them with? If you find only one enlightened person, that is sufficient for all of you.

* * *

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WAYS OF THE HEAVENS is the knowledge of this life and of the next. It allows you to understand each and to compare both. When you have understood the value of this life and the value of the next, you must act for the next life more than for this. If you are strengthened in this way, you must learn to leave this life and to work only for the next. Finally, you must learn to serve the Lord of both lives, of this and of the next.

* * *

CERTAINTY CAN ONLY BE REACHED through your spiritual being. There is a bridge to your spiritual being. This bridge between your physical and your spiritual being is faith. Without faith, there is no connection between you and your higher self. Without faith, you are disconnected within yourself. If you deny the necessity of faith, it means that you prefer to remain imprisoned in your physical being and to let go of your spiritual being. Then, your physical body will become dust and your soul will flutter around helplessly. Darkness, despair and misery will fall on you and after your death you will have no feet to put on the bridge.

* * *

THIS PLANET IS WITHIN SPACE AND TIME. What is space? Is it empty? If space is empty, nothing can move in it. Is it nothing? If it is nothing, then everything in it is nothing. Is it full? Is it something? Nobody can say if it is empty. Nobody knows if it is full, if it is something or if it is nothing. What is space?

* * *

IT IS NOT NECESSARY for the Creator to be amongst His creatures. He is beyond them. But His power and His Divine Attributes are with His creatures. His Divine Knowledge, His Divine Will, His Divine Wisdom, His Divine Justice covers each creature inside and outside. Nobody knows His Essence, but His Divine Attributes appear. The whole universe is their appearance. Therefore, He Alone is the Inner and the Outer.

* * *

ELECTRIC LIGHT does not light the future.

* * *

HE WHO FIGHTS against the Lord of nature is fought by nature.

* * *

PEOPLE DEAL WITH EACH OTHER by using lies. It is the latest fashion. Lies are their money. Without it there is no commerce. Islam says two things regarding this. Firstly, when you believe, stop lying and secondly, do not believe in people, believe in Holy Books.

* * *

THERE ARE ONLY TWO REASONS why one human being should be higher or lower than another one. The first is the obedience of a person to God. The second is the respect that someone pays to another human being. In our days, men are only respected for their wealth or their power. Women are not respected. Men cheat women, and finally no human being respects another.

* * *

WHO WILL BE IN when all are out?

* * *

SINCERITY AND POLITICS are as incompatible as faith and lying.

* * *

THERE IS A WIDE-SPREAD TENDENCY to believe that Holy Scriptures are only of relevance when their words can be historically verified or validated by the most recent scientific discoveries. This way of seeing things starts from the strange idea that heaven has to be pulled down to earth in order to be truly heaven. But the moon is moon only in its place; the sun is sun in its centre, not on earth. Thus the religions should stay where they belong, in their centre. You have to move towards them, not bring them down to your level. What is the benefit if you succeed in pulling the spiritual plane down to the material one? We have had enough of all these material methods and material views. We are trying to free ourselves from the gravity of our physical bodies and physical desires, so that we can rise to our Heavenly Stations. How can so many scholars and scientists believe that what they are doing is so excellent that it will benefit both religion and us? It will turn into its opposite, it will increase the already existing wildness of mankind.

* * *

WE JUMP ABOUT from here to there. We are incapable of paying attention to one thing and of staying with it. If we could concentrate even on the smallest thing, we would find God.

* * *

I DO NOT SAY, 'Follow me', for I know who will follow.

* * *

EVEN IF YOU ARE PHOTOGRAPHED in twenty thousand poses, you are still one. Great wisdom lies in this. To reach your one

essence you must die to yourself while you are still alive. 'Die before you die,' means to be in connection with the original.

* * *

THE LOVE OF THE BELIEVERS, of the saints, of the prophets, comes from the love of God. At first God loves them, then His servants love Him. When does this love come to us? When we begin to obey. You will not become aware of love before beginning to obey. When you dig, you find water. It is the same with obedience, it is like digging in the heart.

* * *

WE CLAIM EXISTENCE, and we cling to this existence. Maybe the price for it is high, very high. 'It does not matter', we keep saying, 'we will pay.'

* * *

YES, I KNOW ALL LANGUAGES. I understand them all. There is also a kind of speaking without speaking, and I know what will be said before it is said. I understand.

* * *

WITH EACH MEETING we put a bit of love into each heart. For, when there is a little bit of love in someone's heart, he will not leave the one who gave him this love, even if he does not listen to what is said, even if he does not keep to it, even if he does not act accordingly.

* * *

GOD DID NOT ORDER HIS SERVANTS to be as correct as possible, He ordered them to be absolutely correct with each other. To be absolutely correct means to be absolutely respectful. The essence of absolute respect is sincerity.

* * *

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to understand yourself. At least you must look into a mirror. No one recognises the imperfections in himself.

* * *

THE RULES OF ETERNAL LIFE are different from the rules of this life. In this life people run after things which run away from them. But whoever wins Him gains all, and whoever loses Him loses all. It is as simple as that. Now, run if you like.

* * *

THE MOST SEVERE HARDSHIPS come from ourselves. To follow religious or secular instructions, to complete all of our small and big actions is nothing in comparison with the attempt to accept and to bear others. There are no two human beings equal to each other. You yourself are different on your outside and in your inside. Each one wants to be alone and independent, each one prefers to have as little to do with others as possible. When they come too close or even touch, they immediately attack. If you withdraw, the other pursues you. You are never by yourself. A man does not want to put up with his wife, a woman does not want to put up with her husband. Children cannot tolerate their parents, parents cannot cope with their children. No neighbour is patient with his neighbour, no soldier with his

officer, no teacher with her pupils, no pupils with their teacher. People have no patience with each other, and no one wants to endure anyone else.

When you see this, step aside. Do not expect help from those who only follow their own desires. They cannot follow their desires and you at the same time. Day by day it becomes more difficult, more dangerous. Lying and mutual suspicion are on the increase. If you are with such people, their illness will spread to you, and you will be as ill as them and as restless and without trust. As a result of this your life will be bitter. Stand aside, as far away as you can. No one can tolerate anyone else, unless he knows he is being tolerated, tolerated and nurtured by the One who sustains everything, sees everything and hides everything. If He did not care for us we would be taken away in an instant.

You must try to reach this attribute of God, this forbearance. But when you think that you are not capable, step aside, do not go amongst people. Live away from them. You need strong faith to live amongst them and to bear with them. If you do not have strong faith, leave them. Live alone, that is difficult enough. For, when you are alone because you cannot endure others, someone will come to you, speak to you and suggest bearing with you. He will not leave you in your seclusion, until you lose your mind. So you cannot even be alone there. However you should not be with this whisperer, you should be with someone who protects and guards you. If, however, you live amongst people, then you must live among them with your best attributes. Your best attribute is to endure them in the same way in which God endures His servants. Does He not bear with you, with everything, with all your bad attributes, with your bad deeds, your bad words? So thus endured by Him, do you not want to bear others? Whatever you do, whether you go alone or with others, guard yourself. If you are strong enough, try to bear with everyone, even if you

do not like them, even if they are on the wrong path. Then, when the time is ripe, God will make an opening in your heart.

* * *

WHAT COMES FIRST, the pearl or the shell?

* * *

MANKIND AS SUCH and all human beings individually are unknown to themselves because they are closed to themselves. If an opening opens to you, you will see. You will be in that opening and you will understand. Outside, you cannot bear such knowledge and such wisdom. A drop of water, if taken out of the ocean, cannot sustain the ocean. Yet, if left in the water, it forms part of the ocean. It is easier to study the water from the beach or on board a ship, because if you go into the water, you will lose yourself. Whoever loses himself in this way, will never return. Nevertheless, they prefer to stay on the beach, and they are happy with their life, with life conditions on land. They say, 'No reason. There is no reason to go in'. Thus it is difficult in our times to understand the secret of the Divine Law. I need someone to pull me and to push me. I do not have the courage to entrust myself to the ocean.

* * *

THE QUR'AN is an ocean. If you stay at its edge you may be able to read what is written, a meaning of scripture which is known to the unbelievers as well. But the Qur'an speaks to the believers of mankind. They are the ones who dive into his oceans of meaning, according to the measure of their faith. The Qur'an is an ocean, but it is unlike the ocean. The further you

dive, the lighter it becomes. The more knowledge you receive, the more being develops. Mankind needs a speaking Qur'an. Allah Almighty sent the silent Qur'an which is the Book. He also sent the speaking Qur'an who was the Prophet, peace be upon him, and He sent his inheritors.

* * *

I REFUSED to have my hand kissed. Then, my Master said, 'They are not kissing your hand, they are kissing mine.' Then I was able to accept. Only when someone is proud do I pull my hand away and kiss his instead.

* * *

EQUALITY IN THIS WORLD is always a kind of tyranny. It is like saying, 'All the corn growing in this field has to be half a meter high.' To achieve this, you have to cut away the differences, and then someone has to reign over 'all that is equal'.

* * *

AN IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC of a Muslim is that when your enemy flees from you, you do not pursue him. My master never said 'No', or 'Why?'.

* * *

TRUE BEING is God's Being. Our existence is only the existence of a form in a mirror. You look, you see yourself in the mirror but it is not real, it is only a shadow. The existence of all humanity, of all creatures, of the whole universe, is only the existence of a shadow. If you do not look into the mirror, you

cannot see your shadow. But, by looking, what you see is still not more than a shadow. That is not you. You are outside the mirror, quite apart from it. All our claims and opinions are such shadows, such imaginings. It is a pity that you are wasting your time.

* * *

IF SOMEONE IS HUMBLE ENOUGH to accept his nothingness, then nothing can hurt him. Nothing can harm him. Life will not be a burden to him. He will be light, going lightly upon his way, acting and living unencumbered. God could have created man as a strong creature. However, there is wisdom in His creating him as the weakest. In this way He saved him from the danger of forgetting God. This danger was most virulent in man, because of the gift which God had given him.

* * *

DOUBT COMES FROM PRIDE. You doubt when you are not humble enough to believe.

* * *

THE EXAMPLE OF THE PROPHET, peace be upon him, rests on three pillars: on his words, on his deeds, and on that which happened in his presence without him intervening. This is also the example of your master.

* * *

WHEN ISLAM BEGINS to adjust itself to the people, it begins to lose its honour.

* * *

WHOEVER SEARCHES WITHIN HIMSELF for a capacity, a quality, or a power which others do not have, builds onto his ego.

* * *

PRIDE IS THE GREATEST OBSTACLE standing between us and our destination.

* * *

ANGER IS A BIG TREE in our heart. It is difficult to uproot it.

* * *

ALL THINGS EXCEPT GOD are like shadows in a mirror.

* * *

EVERYBODY MUST RETURN to his true being in God's Presence, but only those have reason to rejoice who reach it through their will. This is the meaning of 'Die before you die.'

* * *

PERFECTION IS MORE IMPORTANT than knowledge. Perfection is a quality of those sincere servants who see everything in their life as it is and see it as perfect. God is perfect, and everything He does is perfect. Imperfection comes from ourselves. It is a sign of the devil that he possesses great knowledge and, nevertheless, sees imperfection. Someone who is very ignorant may still be perfect. The true friends of God begin their

voyage into the Presence of the Divine with the first step, then rise further and further until they have completed the circle. The end touches the beginning. Their perfection is their ordinariness.

* * *

TO LISTEN IS MORE IMPORTANT than to speak. The recitation of the Qur'an is *summah*, an example worthy to be followed, but listening to the Qur'an is a Holy Order.

* * *

HUMAN BEINGS MUST TURN their faces in one direction. This makes their hearts stable.

* * *

KNOWLEDGE IS NOT AS IMPORTANT as transmission from heart to heart.

* * *

HE WHO IS ON THE LEVEL OF THE EGO cannot be moved through Allah. But if you tell such a person that there is a pearl hidden in a specific place, he will listen. He will believe that life in paradise is wonderful and so finds strength for fasting and praying.

* * *

WHAT WE CALL 'UNDERSTANDING' is our capacity to follow our destination. Our mind does not go beyond the set pathways

of our life. It cannot bear more. Or, as long as you are following your mind, you cannot bear more.

* * *

THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF ORDERS: one comes to you through the prophets, and it is obvious. The other comes to you through the creatures, and it is hidden.

* * *

JUST AS YOU MUST TRUST your master, he must trust you, so that you are capable of keeping this trust and of keeping what is entrusted to you.

* * *

WHATEVER COMES OR GOES, is close. Even if it comes in billions or trillions of years. What we can count is close.

* * *

NEVER REMAIN IDLE. You must occupy your ego. If you do not occupy it with useful work, it will occupy you with harmful work. Do not be careless with your ego.

* * *

WHEN A CHILD IS BORN, it comes into this world with closed hands. It wants to keep its existence. When we die, we die with open hands. This is, after all that struggle, the true pleasure of a human being: to give his whole self to Allah.

* * *

ONE OF THE FRIENDS OF GOD SAID, 'When I see someone from behind, I know how he thinks. When I see his face, I read his book of life'.

* * *

THE DEVIL CAN ONLY SCARE his own people.

* * *

ALL PRAISE, WHATEVER ITS SOURCE, goes to Allah. When I praise you, I praise your Creator. For there is nothing praiseworthy about you, unless it comes from your Creator.

* * *

BE AWAKE, BE WITH YOURSELF in everything you do. Then there is no chance for you to be swept away.

* * *

THE MEETINGS OF THE SAINTS take our burden from us and leave us light and happy. Correction comes from yourself.

* * *

You can know Him with the senses of your heart. But what you lose of Him in your life will not return to you in your life. You must build from what remains.

* * *

ISLAM: THE FREEDOM TO SERVE

WE ASK TO BE NO-ONE AND NOTHING. For, as long as we are someone, we are not complete.

* *
*

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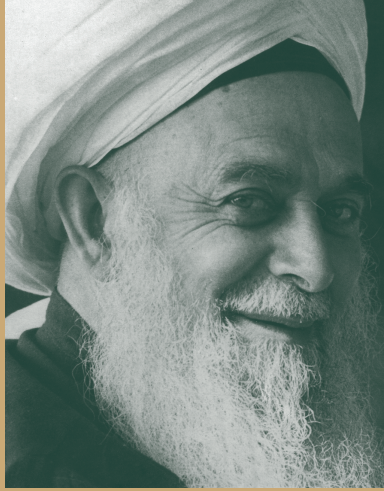
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DO NOT ASK to be no-one and nothing.
For, as long as we are someone,
we are not complete.



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